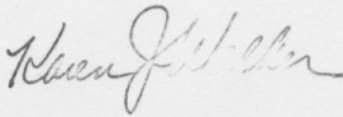


MAR 23 2006

SUBJECT: Food Stamp Nutrition Program—Role in School Wellness Programs

TO: Food Stamp Program Directors
All Regions

FROM: Karen J. Walker 
Director
Program Accountability Division

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarification regarding the role of Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) in supporting or financing the development and implementation of Child Nutrition Local School Wellness Policy as required by Section 204 of the Public Law 108-265.

Public Law 108-265, requires, by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, that all local educational agencies receiving Federal funding for operation of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program have a local school wellness policy. Such policy is intended to promote health and wellness in each school district.

Programs of local wellness, such as school-based programs or community programs, are intended to empower local communities to band together to promote and reinforce healthy eating and lifestyle behaviors such as regular exercise for the well being of their citizenry. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) salutes communities that choose to be proactive in promotion of local wellness programs using resources that are available to them.

To assist in the financing of this effort, FNS is providing non-competitive grants to States to administer the local wellness child nutrition program. State agencies will use the grant funds to provide training and technical assistance for local agencies to adopt, implement and measure implementation.

FSNE helps contribute to community health and wellness goals by providing nutrition education within eligible schools. These nutrition education activities help generally low income students and their families make wise and economical food purchase selections in accordance with dietary guidelines and MyPyramid. FSNE is intended for that segment of the community who are eligible for the Food Stamp Program (FSP). While FSNE may pay for education directed to food stamp recipients and eligibles, it is not within its scope to pay for local initiatives that are directed to the entire community. Such initiatives are the financial responsibility of the community. FSNE can only do its part, within the scope of the FSP. That means FSNE can finance nutrition education in low income schools as defined by the FSNE guidance with a waiver, or pay for its prorata share of the

total costs consistent with proration methodology covered in the Guidance. Approvals of such expenditures are made by FNS within the context of a State FSNE plan.

Although FSNE funds cannot be used in support of systems and environmental changes to institute and implement a local wellness policy for the community at large, it is true nevertheless that USDA's nutrition education resources, when combined, can be a valuable asset in developing local wellness policies. First, there are the noncompetitive grants mentioned above. Also, the USDA Team Nutrition (TN) resource, "Changing the Scene: Improving the School Environment" is a good example of a tool that can be used as a road map for assessing and improving school wellness policy. Although there may be some relevant purposes that are mutually shared between TN and FSNE in the "Changing the Scene" kit, this tool is for locals to use in promoting systems and environmental changes and the costs of implementation which are to be born locally.

Cc:

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